

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**For the Green Ribbon Schools 2015-16 Postsecondary Sustainability Award  
Sponsored by:**



Pursuant to Section 5411(b)(5) of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act

Open to both 2-Year and 4-Year Public and Independent  
Kentucky Postsecondary Institutions

Recognizing postsecondary institutions for reducing environmental impact and costs,  
improving health and wellness on campus, and delivering effective environmental and sustainability education

**PROPOSALS DUE JANUARY 4, 2016  
INTENT TO SUBMIT DUE NOVEMBER 16, 2015**

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## Overview

The U.S. Department of Education's (USDE's) Green Ribbon Schools program began in 2011-12 to inspire schools and districts to strive for excellence in environmental and sustainability practices. In the inaugural year, 78 K-12 schools were recognized as Green Ribbon Schools. Last year, USDE for the first time opened up the competition to institutions of higher education nationally. Western Kentucky University was one of the nine inaugural postsecondary institutions designated a Green Ribbon School for 2014-15. Each State Higher Education Executive Office (SHEEO) may nominate one institution for consideration by USDE, which will make all final award determinations.

While there is no monetary stipend associated with the award, previous winners have benefited from increased publicity and community support, increased application rates, new peer networking opportunities and increased fundraising opportunities. Winners will be announced on Earth Day 2015 (April 22) and will be invited to participate in national and local recognition ceremonies including a prestigious awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. in July.

The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) will form a state selection committee to review all applications, select a nominee, and submit nomination materials to USDE. While the USDE is not bound to select a certain number of honorees, the final national cohort will be reflective of the full range of postsecondary institutions, including two- and four-year institutions and public and independent institutions. An institution may be recognized only once for the award, and the title is accorded for one year only.

## Eligible Applicants

Two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities are eligible to apply, except for Western Kentucky University, which was recognized last year. **All applicants must be in compliance with pertinent health, safety and environmental statutory and regulatory requirements to be eligible for this award.** More specifically, applicants must not have been issued a violation letter of findings from the Office of Civil Rights; there must be no findings of Title IV student aid fund violations; there must be no pending suits by the U.S. Department of Justice alleging the institution has violated one or more civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause; the institution must be in good standing with its regional or national accreditor; and the institution must be willing to undergo an EPA on-site verification that the institution meets all applicable federal, state, and local health, environmental and safety requirements.

## The Pillars

Institutions will be chosen based on demonstrated progress toward each of the Green Ribbon School “Pillars”:

### Reduced Environmental Impact & Costs

- Reduced or eliminated greenhouse gas emissions, using an energy audit or emissions inventory and reduction plan; cost-effective energy efficiency improvements; conservation measures or on-site renewable energy or purchase of green power.
- Improved water quality, efficiency and conservation.
- Reduced solid and hazardous waste production through increased recycling, reduced consumption and improved management, and reduction or elimination of hazardous waste.
- Expanded use of alternative transportation through active promotion of locally-available, energy-efficient options and implementation of alternative transportation supportive projects and policies.

### Improved Health & Wellness

- High standards of coordinated school health, including health, nutrition, and outdoor physical education.
- Health, counseling, and psychological services for both students and staff.
- Family community involvement.
- An integrated school environmental health program that considers occupant health and safety in all design, construction, renovation, and maintenance of facilities and grounds.

### Effective Environmental & Sustainability Education

- Interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems.
- Use of the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content knowledge and thinking skills to prepare graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> century technology-driven economy.
- Development of civic engagement knowledge and skills and students’ application of such knowledge and skills to address sustainability and environmental issues in their community.

## Tips for Completing the Application

When completing the application, you should collect extensive data about campus facilities, health and safety policies, food services, and environmental and sustainability curricula and assessment. It is important to demonstrate concrete achievement using quantified measures and specific examples whenever possible. The United States Department of Education is interested in how your efforts to go green have reduced tuition costs, increased completion rates, boosted rates of employment, and led to robust civic skills among graduates. The information required will necessitate your reaching out to a variety of personnel to gather quantifiable data.

You should assemble a team to work together to complete the application. The team should probably include representatives from the physical plant, health and wellness, food services, environmental education, and any other area related to the three Pillars. Because the application requirements represent a comprehensive approach to greening a campus, they may seem daunting. Remember that you are competing against other schools to see who has made the most progress. These are ambitious goals and few if any campuses are expected to have achieved excellence in all three of the Pillars.

Please submit your application electronically to [melissa.young@ky.gov](mailto:melissa.young@ky.gov) as a single PDF document. Please single space your narrative (double space between paragraphs) and use a 12-point standard font (Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial). All pages must be standard letter size (8.5x11") with one-inch margins on all sides. Please number your pages. Submissions cannot exceed 20 pages, including all required forms. Incomplete or late proposals will be disqualified.

Ensure that submissions comply with accessibility requirements in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Inaccessible applications cannot be accepted. For guidance on creating accessible pdfs, visit the [U.S. Access Board's resources](#), [Health and Human Services checklist for accessible PDFs](#) or World Wide Web Consortium's [techniques for creating accessible PDFs](#). You will want to follow this procedure:

- Make a PDF of each signature and then copy and paste the signature into appropriate place on the Nominee Presentation Form.
- Once you have compiled your documentation and pasted signatures into your Nominee Presentation Form in the appropriate places, insert the Nomination Presentation Form as the first pages of your intended submission.
- If your application is created in Word, be sure to save it as a PDF in order to transmit it. If you scan your Word document to convert it to a PDF, it will not be accessible.

## Application Materials

1. **Nominee Presentation Form (on page 7):** Must be signed by the President.
2. **Nominating Authority Assurances (on page 8):** Must be signed by a representative of the Council on Postsecondary Education.
3. **Executive Summary:** Provide a coherent summary that describes how your college or university is representative of your state's highest-achieving green schools. Summarize your strengths and accomplishments in all three Pillars and their underlying Elements. Include concrete examples of work in every Pillar and Element. Only institutions that document progress in every Pillar and Element can be considered for the award.
4. **Application Narrative:** Address how your college or university is meeting each of the three Pillars, providing specific examples and data to support your claims.
  - a. **Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs:** Describe how your college or university is reducing environmental impact and costs by reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions; improving water quality, efficiency and conservation; reducing waste production; and using alternative forms of transportation. Identify your institution's energy-efficient facilities and practices, ecologically beneficial use of grounds, and methods of disposal for solid and hazardous waste. Documentation may include Energy Star certifications, LEED certifications, percent of energy consumption derived from on-site renewable energy generation, percent of energy consumption derived from purchased renewable energy; offsets in GHG emissions, water-efficient landscaping and irrigation practices, use of green cleaning supplies, recycling policies and practices, and bike lanes and other efforts to reduce traffic.
  - b. **Improved Health and Wellness:** Describe how your college or university is improving the health and wellness of students, faculty and staff by integrating a campus-wide environmental health program and promoting sound health and wellness practices. You should discuss integrated pest management, contaminant controls and ventilation, asthma controls, indoor air quality, moisture control, and chemical management. Address the amount and type of outdoor time and recreational facilities your students and staff have access to, as well as the types of fresh, local, and organic food they eat. Other components you may want to include are health education, health services, counseling, psychological and social services, staff health promotion and family and community involvement.

- c. **Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education:** Describe how your college or university provides effective environmental and sustainability education by incorporating STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways. Provide examples of interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy, and human systems. Demonstrate how your institution uses the environment and sustainability to develop STEM content, knowledge, and critical thinking skills. You should also discuss how your institution develops and applies civic knowledge and skills to environmental and sustainability education. Documentation may include use of outdoor classrooms or laboratories, related community engagement and volunteering projects, and degree programs related to environmental and sustainability fields.

## Scoring of Applications

Executive Summary **(10 points)**

Pillar 1: Narrative on Reduced Environmental Impact and Costs **(30 points)**

Pillar 2: Narrative on Improved Health and Wellness **(30 points)**

Pillar 3: Narrative on Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education **(30 points)**

## Timeline

**November 16, 2015:** Submit a brief e-mail to [melissa.young@ky.gov](mailto:melissa.young@ky.gov) signifying your intent to apply.

**January 4, 2016:** E-mail application materials to CPE by 4:30 p.m. Eastern time. Submit your application as a single PDF file to [melissa.young@ky.gov](mailto:melissa.young@ky.gov)

**January 2016:** State selection committee meets to review applications and select one nominee to put forward to the U.S. Department of Education.

**January 2016:** CPE works with the selected nominee to prepare application materials.

**February 1, 2016:** CPE submits Kentucky's postsecondary nomination to participate in the national competition.

**April 22, 2016:** U.S. Department of Education announces honorees.

## Additional Resources

For additional resources, please visit the [U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools](http://www.ed.gov/greenribbon) website. Additionally, you may consult the [Green Strides Resources](http://www.ky.gov/greenstrides) page to review tools to help schools achieve excellence in the three Pillars.

## NOMINEE PRESENTATION FORM

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of President (Dr., Ms., Mr., etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Official College/University Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: (including street): \_\_\_\_\_

Basic Classification:    ☐ Public 2-Year                      ☐ Public 4-Year                      ☐ Private Non-Profit

County: \_\_\_\_\_ IPEDS Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATIONS

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
2. The college or university is providing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a compliance review.
3. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the college or university concluding that the nominated college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
4. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
5. There are no findings by Federal Student Aid of violations in respect to the administration of Title IV student aid funds.
6. The college or university is in good standing with its regional or national accreditor.
7. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on-site verification.

***I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **NOMINATING AUTHORITY ASSURANCES**

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the college's or university's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
2. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on-site verification.

***I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.***

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Name of Nominating Agency

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Name of Nominating Authority

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Nominating Authority's Signature

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Date